

Creating Posters in PowerPoint

Prepare

1. **Determine the size of the poster** – Our posters will be 40x32 and printed on the department plotter in the grad cluster.
2. **Know your audience** – Our audience will be mostly Civil & Environmental Engineers, but from many different backgrounds. All content does not need to be on your poster. Summarize information on the poster that can be understood by all viewers and provide handouts to take away that includes more technical details.
3. **Gather your content** - Organize your information into sections, e.g. title, introduction, problem, method, results, conclusion. Each section of information should include a heading, succinct text, and clarifying figures, charts, or photographs

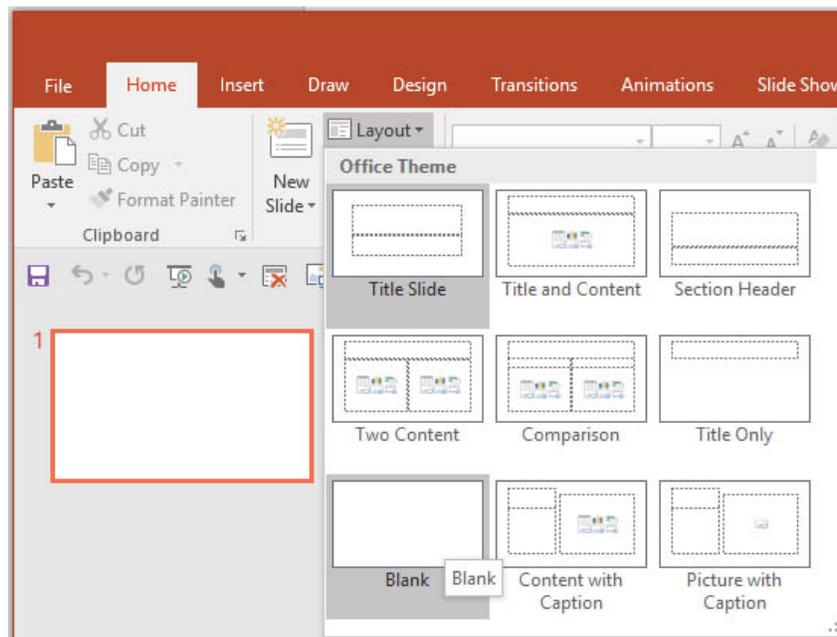
Design

1. Make several small sketches first. Thinking through the design will help you determine the sections you want to include and where you want to place them.
2. Guide the eye of the viewer through the composition - Create your poster with 3-4 columns to help your audience easily follow the direction of your information. You will need to consider object placement. If you have a lot of small objects use a device, such as a large color area, to tie the objects together. Blocks of text will act as a single element, especially when viewed from a distance. Consider the shape and position of these text blocks. Be careful not to position objects so they lead the viewer's eyes off the poster.
3. Use post-it notes to represent sections and their relative size and position on the poster to help you with the overall composition before you open the software.
4. Guide the eye with edges - Align photographs, headings, text materials
5. Guide the eye with color and contrast in concert with shape and size - Use the following basic principles to guide your audience through your content.
 - a. Areas of brilliant color and high contrast move to the foreground. These are the areas of invitation - the first areas the viewer sees.
 - b. Areas of low contrast and pale color move into the background and are viewed later.
 - c. Help color blind member of your audience by making sure contrasts are high between bars of graphs, lines on charts and text on background. The most common form of color blindness effects red and green.
6. Use color to highlight, separate, define or associate information - Use subtle colors. Color should never compete with your content for attention.
7. Use white space to direct attention to key elements. You don't have to fill up every available space.
8. Leave at least 1 inch of white space around the outside edges and between columns.
9. Leave more space between content sections and less between items within a section.
10. Avoid placing text on the bottom 5-6 inches of the poster. It is difficult to read. However, it is acceptable to place an image in this space.
11. Create legible text- The following are good practices for text:
 - a. Avoid extremely long titles (e.g. wrong -The secret life of a Praying Mantis in the Tropical Forests of South America, right- The secret life of a Praying Mantis)
 - b. Avoid fonts below 24 point. Following are suggested sizes for text:

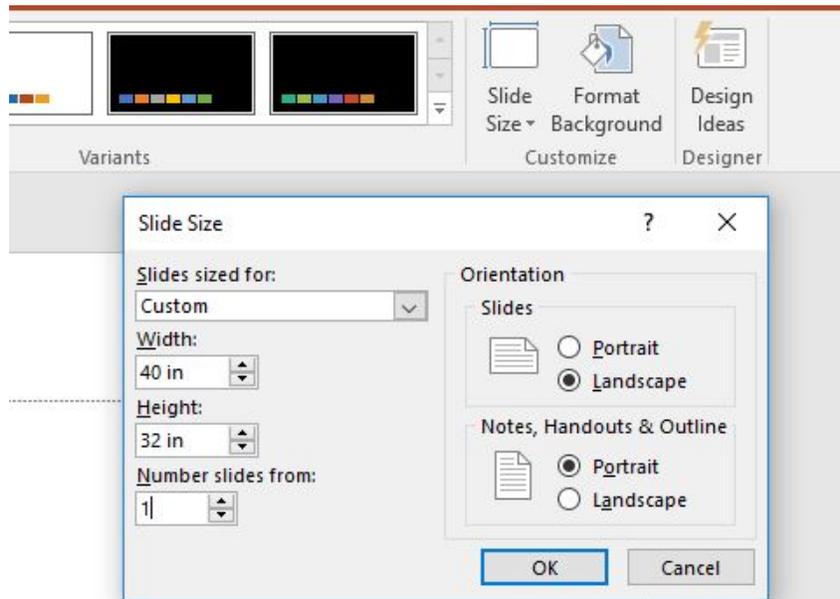
- i. Main title - 90-100 point bold and readable from 10 feet away
 - ii. Body text - 28-32 point, sans serif are recommended (e.g. Ariel, Helvetica, etc.)
 - c. Avoid excessive use of different fonts, 2-3 are acceptable.
 - d. Avoid ornate fonts which may be difficult to read
 - e. Avoid highlighting single words within the text
 - f. Never use all capitals in text or titles
 - g. Left justify your text
 - h. Use bullets or numbering for lists or steps
 - i. Use black text on a white background for maximum readability
12. **Create impact with graphics.** The following are good practices for using images:
- a. Illustrate your points with images whenever possible (e.g. replace extensive data with charts)
 - b. Never use an image that does not directly support the content.
 - c. Use images that are formatted correctly
 - d. Provide captions for your images
 - e. Avoid using low resolution images from the Internet.
 - f. Always include citations for figures and images that you did not create.

Implement

1. Open PowerPoint and select **Home** → **Layout** → **Blank**

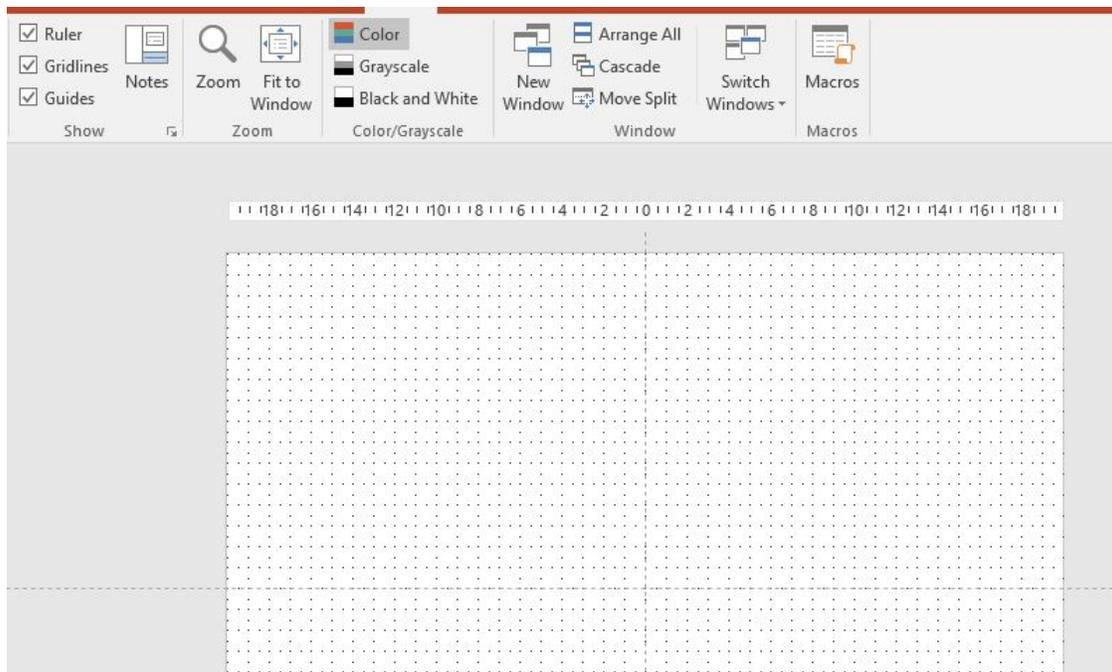


2. Select **Design** → **Slide Size** → **Custom Slide Size**. Our poster board is 40" by 32" Note that I chose to make my slide in Landscape mode. Depending on how you design your poster, you might choose Portrait instead.

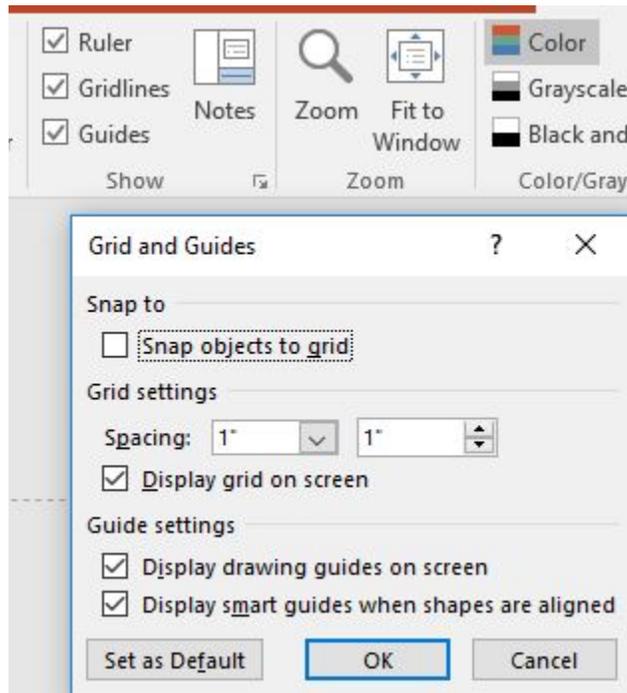


3. Since you will only be able to see subsections of your poster on your screen, you may find it useful to turn on the ruler, gridlines, and guides so you can tell where you are in the poster. Select **View**. In the **Show** section, click the boxes next to Ruler, Gridlines and Guides:

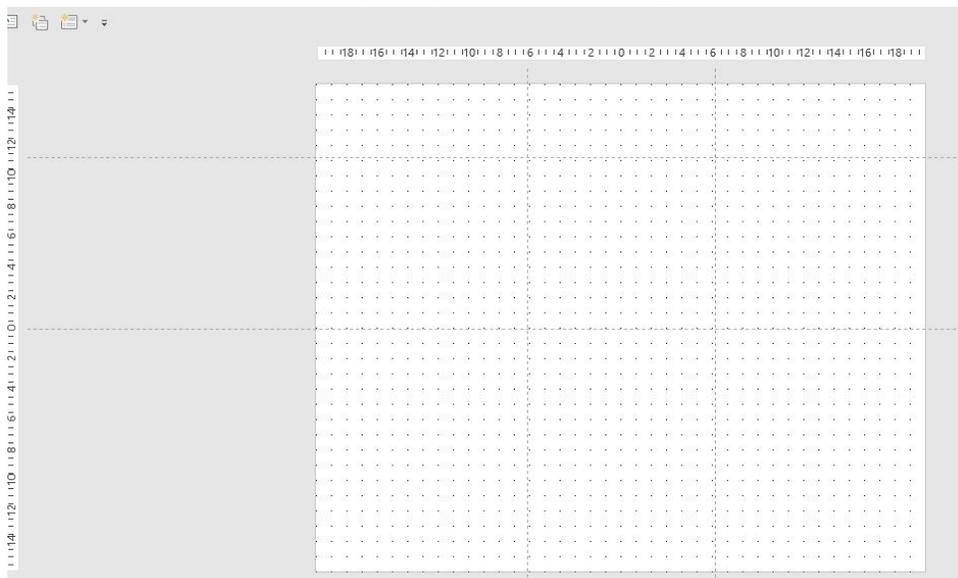
4.



5. If you click on the fly out arrow in **Show**, you can set the spacing for the grid. 1' is about right for this layout. You can also turn Smart Guides on or off. Smart Guides are useful when you are lining up text and pictures on opposite sides of the poster.



6. You can create new guides by right clicking on an existing guide. You can drag the guides around so that they define the big design chunks of your poster:



Plotters cannot print right to the edge of the paper, so allow for a margin (minimum of 1 inch) when adding content to your poster.

Finally, **do not use a background image** in your poster. Background images make the posters difficult to read, they increase the size of the file which increases the time it takes to download and print the file, and they waste ink.

When you are done, save your file as a pdf. The instructions for printing pdf files are taped to the desk next to the plotter, which is in the graduate computer cluster at the beginning of the Porter 118 corridor.